



Edwin Durgy (<http://www.forbes.com/sites/edwindurgy/>) Forbes Staff

*The world's billionaires and how they got that way.*

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# Tom Golisano On Revolutionizing The Electoral College

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In February [Tom Golisano](#)



(<http://blogs-images.forbes.com/edwindurgy/files/2011/09/golisano.jpg>)

*Billionaire Tom Golisano speaking at a USA Hockey press conference*



(<http://www.forbes.com/profile/tom-golisano/>), founder and Chairman of [Paychex](#) (<http://finapps.forbes.com/finapps/jsp/finance/compinfo/CIAtAGlance.jsp?tkr=PAYX>), sold the NHL's Buffalo Sabres to fellow [Forbes 400](#) (<http://www.forbes.com/forbes-400/>) member [Terry Pegula](#) (<http://www.forbes.com/profile/terrence-pegula/>) for \$189 million, reportedly rejecting a rival offer worth \$70 million more. The latter would have moved the Sabres out of Buffalo which proved to be a deal breaker for Golisano, a New York native. Since the sale Golisano has engaged himself in a new political endeavor, one with the ultimate goal of fundamentally changing the way we elect the President of the United States.

Below Golisano discusses the benefits of electing the President by national popular vote and what inspired him to take up the fight:

*This story appears in the Oct. 10, 2011 issue of Forbes Magazine.*

**We have a system in the United States** for electing the President that has three major flaws. One, the candidate who gets the most votes may not win the presidency. It's happened four times in our history which is quite a few times, actually. When you think about every position we elect, from the captain of the football team to the governor of the state, it's all done by the popular vote. Why would this be different?

The second problem is that every vote doesn't count equally. In 2004 if 66,000 people in Ohio had voted differently, John Kerry would have been the President, even though he had 3 million fewer votes. Problem number three is that our country, because of the winner-take-all rule, is divided into battleground states and flyover states. And about two-thirds or three-fourths of the states are flyover states, where the candidates never spend any time or resources because they know the winner of that state is predetermined.

#### The National Popular Vote

(<http://www.nationalpopularvote.com/>) is about getting states to convert from the winner-take-all rule. The states that pass the legislation will assign all their electoral votes to the candidate that got the most votes in the country, not just in the state. We don't need a constitutional amendment to get this done. We do it by getting state legislatures and their governors to agree to do it. And as soon as we have enough electoral votes, which is 270, or just over half, it happens. Right now we're at 132, including California, where Governor Jerry Brown recently signed the bill into law. So we're halfway home.

We have lobbying efforts in 42 states. We also have the opportunity for an initiative and referendum in 19 states. This is healthy for the country. I don't think we want to have debacles like we had in 2000 and almost had in 2004 and earlier in our history. This is just a good way to make every vote count equally. The guy who started this is John Koza [a computer science professor at Stanford who also invented the scratch-off lottery ticket]. I had seen the progress that John and his people had made, and I said this is worth doing, it's doable. I've become the national spokesperson and the major financier [injecting several million dollars into the effort]. This doesn't cost the country anything. And it's also not an opportunity of the day because we know this is a multiyear battle. This thing polls nationally over 70% in favor.

Most people don't understand the Electoral College; they don't know why it exists. And when you try to explain it to them they still don't know why it exists. I mean, that's reason enough to change it right there. If we go by the National Popular Vote we'll get more people voting. Voter turnout in battleground states is 7% higher than the rest of the country. A lot of politicians say they want to get people out to vote; sometimes you can't totally believe they really want that.

In the five months I've been involved in this, I think I've visited 16 states already and met with top leaders in all of these states. I was surprised at how little our state legislators know about our Electoral College and how it functions. So we have some education to do. You have to sit down with people

and say this is how it works, and this is why it's good, this is why it's better than the other system. And that takes time, it takes effort, it takes people, it takes resources. But nobody's surprised at that. I'm looking forward to visting more states and meeting more people. Quite frankly, now that we've reached the halfway point I'm convinced it's not a matter of if, it's a matter of when.

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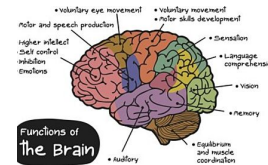


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*The world's billionaires and how they got that way.*

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# Flashes In The Pan: One And Dones Of The Forbes 400

*This story appears in the October 7, 2013 issue of Forbes.*

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Each year the [Forbes 400 list of America's wealthiest citizens](http://www.forbes.com/forbes-400/) (<http://www.forbes.com/forbes-400/>) is peppered with newcomers. This year's crop of fresh faces includes the usual mix: technology wunderkinds like [Ubiquiti Networks](/companies/ubiquiti-networks/) (</companies/ubiquiti-networks/>) [UBNT -0.94%](/companies/ubiquiti-networks/) (</companies/ubiquiti-networks/>) founder Robert Pera, dogged entrepreneurs such as [Bass Pro Shops](/companies/bass-pro-shops/) (</companies/bass-pro-shops/>) founder John Morris and recently discovered heirs like Catherine Lozick, who derives her \$1.7 billion fortune from the Solon, Ohio-based manufacturing company Swagelok.

Each and every member of the Forbes 400, Buffett, Brin, [Bloomberg](/companies/bloomberg/) (</companies/bloomberg/>) and the rest, was at one time in their place, a recent initiate in the world's most exclusive club. But when someone is new it is often impossible to tell if they are destined to become an American legend like the names above, or if they will spend just a few years at the top before flaming out or simply getting left behind.

While hundreds have come and gone over the decades, only a relative handful have managed to do so in twelve months. Click the slideshow to view a few of the most notable names to have graced the pages of the Forbes 400 for just one year, and to find out why the one-time newcomers did not last.

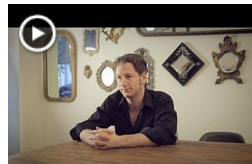
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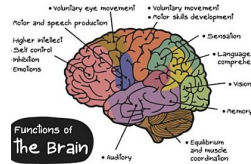
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